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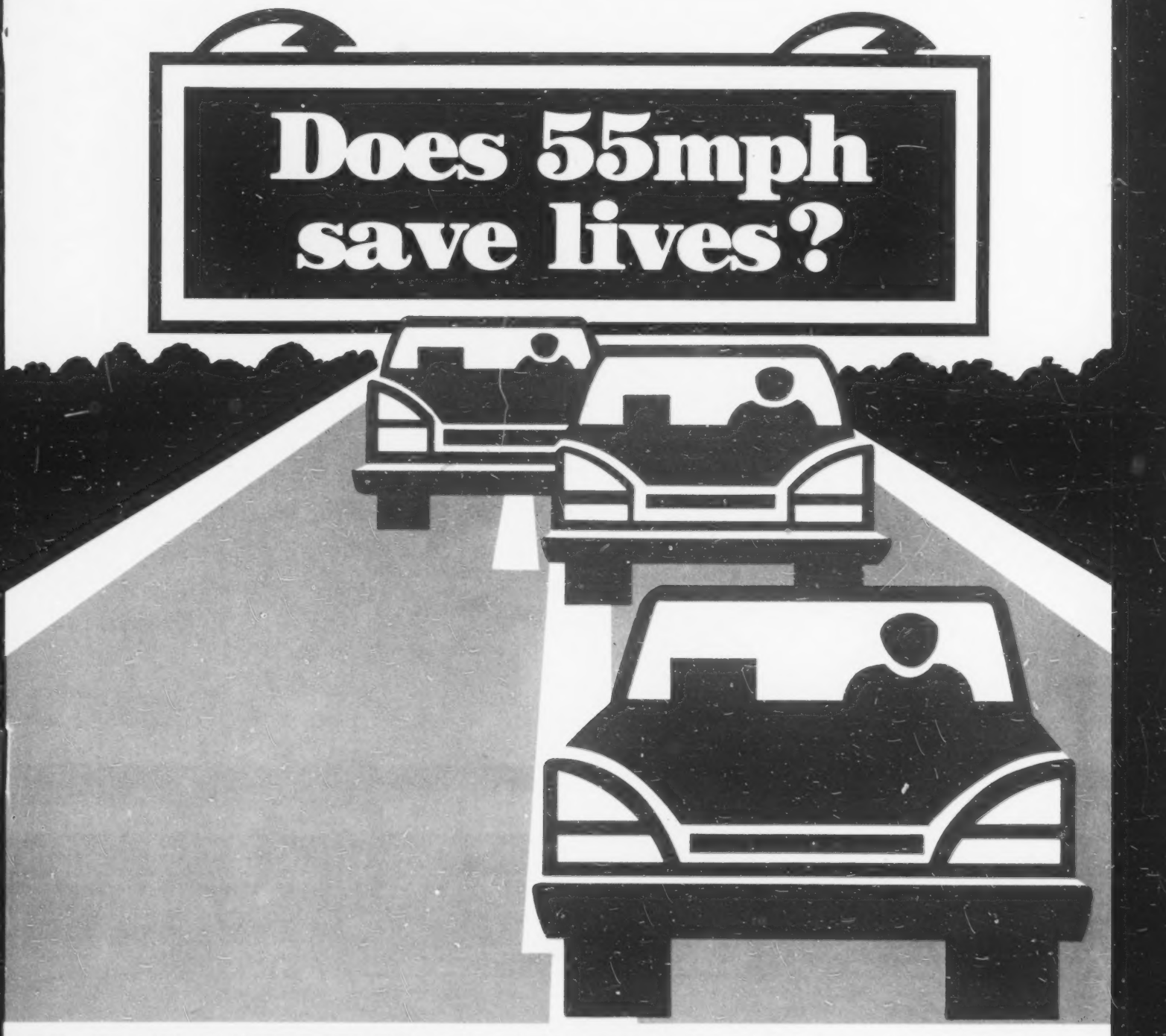

NAFA'S SAFETY ISSUE/ SAFETY SURVEY RESULTS

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NAFA Bulletin

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Does 55

Eleven years after the 55 miles per hour speed limit became law, controversy still exists as to whether 55 saves enough lives, fuel, and money to justify continuing it.

Proponents cite an annual savings of two to four thousand lives and $2 billion worth of fuel attributable to 55 as reasons for keeping it. Critics cite the disadvantages of additional driving time and widespread public disregard for 55 as reasons for abolishing it.

The question still remains: Should we keep 55? The Highway Users Federation examined this question. Here's what they had to say.

At the request of Congress, the Transportation Research Board (TRB) of the National Academy of Sciences completed a year-long study of the effects of the 55 mph speed limit in November, 1984. The study report, "55: A Decade of Experience," recommended that the speed limit be retained on most highways now posted at 55.

The wrenching effects of the 1973-74 Arab oil embargo led to the imposition of the 55 mph speed limit in March 1974 as part of the Emergency Energy Conservation Act. The TRB study shows that it has and continues to save motor fuel.

A passenger car traveling at 70 mph uses 14 to 31 percent more fuel than one traveling at 55. If the cars on the road in 1983 traveled at speeds prevailing before 55 was imposed — an average of 65 mph — they would have used 110,000 more barrels of fuel per day, according to the TRB.

The fuel savings attributable to the 55 mph speed limit amount to a market value of about $2 billion a year, which "represents a substantial reduction in the balance of payments deficit," the TRB study says. "Should another fuel crisis occur, the energy savings attributable to the 55 mph speed limit could be important."

However, the major benefit of the 55 mph speed limit law was the remarkable reduction in traffic fatalities. The TRB estimates that 3,000 to 5,000 lives a year were saved in the early years of the 55 mph speed limit. As safer vehicles, improved highways, and other safety advances have come into play in the intervening years, the TRB esimates current life savings attributable to 55 at 2,000 to 4,000 a year.

In addition, some 2,500 to 4,500 fewer serious, severe, and critical injuries and 34,000 fewer minor and moderate injuries occur each year because of the slower speeds and more uniform traffic pace brought about by the 55 mph speed limit. The TRB study calculates the 55 mph speed limit reduces medical bills, legal costs, and the costs of motor vehicle damage by $122 to $240 million annually.

Arguments Against 55

Average highway speeds have been increasing since 1974, and lack of support for 55 in some state legislatures and by some Congressmen are leading to predictions that the law will be abolished. Here are some common arguments against 55:

The benefits of 55 aren't worth the extra driving time. The average highway user now spends about seven more hours a year on the road than in 1973, when speeds averaged 65 mph. Yet the national total of about 1 billion additional hours a year driving time translates into about one minute per person per day. The current time loss is at least partially offset by savings in fuel, mainte-

Save Lives?

nance, and insurance costs, which is why most large trucking companies support 55.

Widespread noncompliance with 55 is breeding a nation of scofflaws. While it is true that most motorists exceed 55, the majority don't exceed it by much. Exceeding the speed limit by five mph now means 60 instead of 70 or 75, as it did in pre-55 days. As with other frequently-violated traffic laws, such as coming to a full stop at stop signs, it's a lot safer with the law than without it.

Speed limits can be raised safely on many stretches of rural interstates. The TRB estimates that raising the speed limit to 60 or 65 mph on the 31,500 miles of rural interstate highways would result in about 500 more traffic deaths per year, increase motor fuel consumption by about 10 million more barrels annually, and increase taxpayer costs for death, disability and injury by about $10 million a year.

Alternatives to 55

While the TRB strongly endorsed 55, it left to Congress the decision on whether or not states should be allowed to raise speeds on selected stretches of rural interstates. It also recommends that state compliance be measured through a point system attaching more significance to high-speed violations than to violations just above the speed limit.

Since the TRB report came out, four bills to weaken or repeal 55 have be introduced in Congress. In the Senate, S-329 sponsored by Senator Chic Hecht (R-Nev.) would allow states to raise the speed limit on rural interstates. In the House of Representatives, HR-693 would permit a 65 mph speed limit on rural interstates where safe; HR-1086 would repeal the 55 law altogether, turning maximum speed limits back to the states; and HR-1163 would allow states to establish maximum speeds of up to 70 mph.

HR-3129, the Federal-aid Highway Act of 1985, introduced on July 31 by Representative Glenn Anderson (D-Cal.) and 39 co-sponsors, takes a different approach. It retains the 55 limit but establishes a new formula for measuring state compliance. Instead of considering all speeds over 55 to be of equal statistical importance, as is now the case, the new formula would weigh speed limit violations by the type of highway and the excessiveness of the speed. For example, speeds over 65 mph on a conventional rural highway would count 40 times as much as speeds between 55 and 60 mph on an interstate or other access controlled highway in computing a state's weighted "score." The current authority to penalize states out of compliance would be extended.

> ***"The major benefit of the 55 mph speed limit law was the remarkable reduction in traffic fatalities... Current life savings attributable to 55 are 2,000 to 4,000 a year. In addition, some 2,500 to 4,500 fewer serious, severe, and critical injuries occur and 34,000 fewer minor and moderate injuries occur."***

(Continued on page 12)

Does 55 Save Lives?

(Continued from page 9)

Federal law now requires that at least 50 percent of traffic traveling on roads posted at 55 mph in each state must be in compliance with the speed limit. Any state not meeting this standard may lose up to 10 percent of its federal-aid primary, secondary, and urban highway funds.

The states collect this speed data through automatic recording devices imbedded in the roadway. Speeds are monitored on the various types of highways posted at 55, over 24-hour periods in good weather, and the results are reported to the Federal Highway Administration.

The law allows adjustments to the raw speed data to account for speedometer error, sampling errors, and inaccurate speed measuring devices.

A total of 576,290 miles of highways posted at 55 were monitored for speed throughout the country in 1984. The data show that after adjustments, 42 percent of the traffic monitored was exceeding 55 mph.

Arizona reported the percent of monitored traffic exceeding 55 mph at 56.3 percent; Maryland, 55.9 percent, and Vermont, 51.8 percent. All other states reported less than 50 percent exceeding 55 mph.

Under the 10 percent penalty, the three states out of compliance could together lose up to $13 million in federal highway funds, as follows: Arizona, $5.3 million; Maryland, $5.8 million, and Vermont, $1.9 million.

However, states where most highways posted at 55 are limited access highways such as interstates or roads built to interstate standards tend to register higher average speeds simply because well-designed, modern highways are where higher speeds generally occur. Of all highways in the U.S. posted at 55, 54 percent are "rural collectors," usually two-lane roads where grades, curves, or sight-distances encourage slower speeds. But Maryland and Vermont, for example, have no rural collectors posted as high as 55 mph.

Implications of New System

The proposed Federal-aid Highway Act of 1985, by weighing the compliance measurement heavily **against** those states with speed violations on conventional rural roads posted at 55, would generally reverse the state compliance list. States with considerable mileage of two-lane conventional roads posted at 55 could have trouble complying, depending on the "score" Congress selects to trigger the penalty.

During the lifetime of the 55 mph speed limit, the interstate system has had the greatest safety improvement. The fatality rate for all roads declined by 15 percent, but dropped by 32 percent on interstates.

(Continued on page 14)

NAFA Members Approve of 55 mph

Since discussion of the 55 mile an hour speed limit evokes such controversy, NAFA asked several of its members to share their opinions about the law. Those interviewed overwhelmingly approved of the 55 mph limit and believe it saves lives, money and fuel. Here's what they had to say:

"The 55 mph limit is economical and has been proven to reduce accidents," said Ken Ingram, purchasing manager, Burlington Northern Airfreight. "Road fatality rates have dropped since it has been implemented." Susan Stupak, fleet manager, Keebler Co., agrees, "The 55 mph limit has decreased damage to vehicles as well as save lives. I cannot even begin to estimate the monetary savings, because it is so astronomical."

Respondents also credit the 55 mph limit with reducing average highway speeds. "People are now averaging 45 to 55 mph instead of 60 to 70 mph as they were when the limit was higher," said Patsy Brownson, fleet manager, REMCO.

Some NAFA members advocated the 55 mph limit but had some reservations about it. "It is a good law," said Steve Schultz, fleet administrator, Merrill Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and chairman of NAFA's Safety Committee. "It is economically feasible and it has been proven to reduce roadway fatalities, but other traffic dictates if you must speed up." Stupak echoed these sentiments: "I average 65 to 70 mph and stay in the right lane. I would get killed if I did 55 mph because everybody — at least in the morning and evening rush hours on the highways I travel — goes faster than 55 mph."

Jerry Keenan, manager, auto fleet department, GAB Business Services, Inc., said, "Gasoline savings aside, it has saved a lot of lives. However, I do not think the speed itself is the determinant of saving lives — traffic flow saves lives. If traffic flows, it will be safer because the whole pack of cars is moving and driving safely."

John Palmer, auto fleet administrator, Citizens Insurance Co., does not think the 55 limit is necessarily a good law on interstate roadways. "It does not really save lives, not on interstates at least," Palmer said. "Maybe on secondary roads it does, but it is too low a limit for interstates. Everybody goes faster than 55 mph. I drive 59 mph all the time and everybody passes me."

Joe Clark, fleet operations manager, Burroughs Wellcome Co., agreed. "I like the 55 mph speed limit because percentage-wise it saves lives and there are less injuries, but people just do not observe the law. I would vote for a change to 60 mph, at least in North Carolina, because everyone goes that speed and the difference economically would not be that great."

Does 55 Save Lives?

(Continued from page 12)

(In 1983, the interstate fatality rate was less than half that of all the nation's roads.) Primary highways and secondary roads have seen fatality drops of 17 and 13 percent, respectively. The proposed new federal formula for measuring compliance would clearly emphasize speed reduction on road systems with less sharply declining fatality rates than the interstate.

Mood of the Country

In Congressional testimony this summer, the Highway Users Federation reflected the broad-based support of business and industry for 55.

"We will resist efforts to thwart the intent of this landmark legislation," Federation President John A. Clements testified, although he said the Federation would support changing the compliance measurement system as recommended by the TRB.

But 55 remains under attack in some places.

In the states this year, 13 legislatures considered proposals to repeal 55 or weaken enforcement. But the bills died or were vetoed in Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming. North and South Dakota enacted laws to reduce fines and points assessed for speeding.

"Public opinion polls show that the motoring public overwhelmingly support 55. Support is strongest among Easterners, women, and drivers over 30 years old..."

Nevada passed a seat belt use law to become effective only if the federal government allows Nevada to raise its speed limit to 70 mph. A proposal has been introduced in the New York legislature to raise the speed limit to 65 mph on the New York Thruway, which runs from the New York City metropolitan area to Buffalo.

Yet despite sporadic legislative attempts to weaken the law, public opinion polls show that the motoring public overwhelmingly supports 55, even though distinctions by age, sex, and region exist. A Gallup poll taken in 1982 and reported by the TRB shows that a majority of Americans endorse retention of the law. Support is strongest among Easterners, women, and drivers over 30 years old, although 55 is favored by 72 percent of Westerners, 66 percent of males, and 72 percent of those under 30 years old.

The polls reported by TRB show the typical opponent to the 55 mph speed limit to be a male, aged 30 or less, living in the South or West. These typical opponents to 55, young males, are the most accident-prone group of all drivers.

The surveys do not indicate increasing hostility towards police or traffic laws. A 1982 Gallup poll shows consistent support for 55 despite an increase in the percentage of those stopped for speeding since a 1981 poll. ■

1984 Speed Limit Enforcement Certification Data*

(Source: Federal Highway Administration)

State	Percent Exceeding 55 mph	Highway Mileage Subject to Speed Monitoring
Alabama	42.3	16,581.5
Alaska	35.1	1,755.9
Arizona	56.3	5,610.6
Arkansas	39.2	14,407.0
California	45.4	24,670.0
Colorado	42.5	6,209.0
Connecticut	48.1	480.3
Delaware	41.4	183.1
District of Columbia	—	—
Florida	46.2	11,925.0
Georgia	31.6	27,374.0
Hawaii	34.4	280.3
Idaho	35.0	4,331.5
Illinois	33.5	14,214.0
Indiana	46.6	10,926.0
Iowa	37.8	22,273.0
Kansas	42.4	19,037.0
Kentucky	33.0	13,616.0
Louisiana	46.6	9,929.0
Maine	49.8	1,162.7
Maryland	55.9	900.8
Massachusetts	45.7	921.2
Michigan	49.7	23,750.0
Minnesota	34.6	24,452.0
Mississippi	46.8	17,163.0
Missouri	44.5	24,943.6
Montana	45.4	9,727.0
Nebraska	47.9	11,962.0
Nevada	49.2	4,321.9
New Hampshire	41.7	668.2
New Jersey	39.7	933.0
New Mexico	45.2	7,009.0
New York	42.3	14,329.0
North Carolina	36.2	14,790.0
North Dakota	48.2	10,112.0
Ohio	41.6	18,518.9
Oklahoma	44.2	12,197.0
Oregon	45.6	13,467.0
Pennsylvania	32.6	10,684.0
Puerto Rico	49.5	143.9
Rhode Island	45.0	81.2
South Carolina	31.4	12,256.0
South Dakota	43.1	13,528.0
Tennessee	40.7	14,324.0
Texas	45.6	53,807.0
Utah	40.6	3,963.0
Vermont	51.8	371.1
Virginia	30.0	14,786.0
Washington	39.6	4,840.0
West Virginia	25.5	7,465.8
Wisconsin	39.2	19,296.0
Wyoming	47.2	5,612.5
National	**42.0**	**576,290.0**

*As reported by the states in the Certification of Speed Limit Enforcement submitted for the period October 1, 1983 to September 30, 1984.

NAFA'S Safety Larger Fleets Have

A total of 182 NAFA members participated in NAFA's 1985 Safety Survey. The survey is designed to determine what safety policies and procedures are enforced by NAFA member companies. In addition, it looked at methods of data collection and statistics on accident frequency.

To determine whether there are any differences between large and small fleets concerning safety, respondents were asked to check one of five categories: less than 100 vehicles, 101-500 vehicles, 501-2500 vehicles, 2501-5000 vehicles or more than 5000 vehicles. Of the 182 respondents, 24 represented fleets of less than 100 vehicles, 76 represented fleets with 101-500 vehicles, 64 represented fleets of 501-2500 vehicles, 13 represented fleets of 2501-5000 vehicles, and five represented fleets of 5000 vehicles or more.

Sixty percent of fleets with more than 5,000 vehicles responded positively to the question, "Does your company have a defensive driving/accident prevention program?" The remaining large fleet categories, 501-2500 and 2501-5000, also had high percentages of 'Yes' votes: 61 percent and 58 percent, respectively. Small fleet categories, fleets of less than 100 and 101-500 vehicles, said 'Yes' 38 percent and 41 percent of the time, respectively.

Companies Use NSC Pamphlets

Companies that have defensive driving programs most often use pamphlets from the National Safety Council and insurance company newsletters to promote their programs. Other widely used promotional techniques are in-house meetings, mandatory courses for all drivers, posters, safe driving awards, and safe driving incentives such as free options or discounts on options.

Steve Schultz
Safety Committee Chairman

53% Have Written Safety Policies

More than half, 53 percent, of all fleets responding have written safety policies. This percent, however, is deceiving since 71 percent — a vast majority — of organizations with more than 500 vehicles, and only 29 percent — a vast minority — of organizations with less than 500 vehicles have written safety policies. Overall, 58 percent of all respondents have mandatory seat belt policies. Categorically, 45 percent of less than 100 vehicle fleets, 45 percent of 101-500 vehicle fleets, 73 percent of 501-2500 vehicle fleets, 64 percent of 2501-

Survey Results: More Safety Policies

5000 vehicle fleets, and 80 percent of 5000 or more vehicle fleets have seat belt policies.

The large fleet categories also have a higher percentage of companies using driver training programs than the small fleet categories: 48 percent, 64 percent, and 80 percent for large fleet categories and 35 percent and 31 percent for small fleet categories.

Large Fleets Have Review Boards

In addition, large fleet categories have higher percentages of 'Yes' votes to the question: "Does your company have an accident review board?": 64 percent, 50 percent, and 80 percent for large fleet categories and 29 percent and 44 percent for small fleet categories. Large fleets also tend to keep in-depth accident journals more than small fleets: 98, 83, and 100 percents for the large fleet categories and 73 and 88 percents for the small fleet categories.

More than half of all fleets in each large fleet category are members of the National Safety Council (53, 50, and 60 percent), while less than half (35 and 38 percent) of all fleets in both small fleet categories are members of the NSC. Larger fleets also tend to use materials from the National Safety Council more often than small fleets.

Small Fleets Obtain Accident Costs

Fleets in the small fleet categories are able to obtain total accident costs more than those in the large fleet categories. Eighty-seven and 81 percent in the small fleet categories said 'Yes' while 75, 67, and 60 percent in the large fleet categories said they could obtain total accident costs.

Drivers with repeated accidents are reprimanded in a variety of ways. Most frequently, drivers are made to pay part of the deductible amount of the damage caused to the car. Other actions include counseling to determine if the driver has a drinking or related abuse problem, retraining, oral and/or written reprimands that are made note of in the driver's permanent file, reassignment to a non-car position, fines, suspension, probation, and, if warranted, termination of employment.

The accident frequency ratio for fleets with less than 100 vehicles averaged 11.60 with the high being 28.45 and the low 2.00. For fleets of 101-500 vehicles the ratio average was 10.66 with a high of 62.48 and a low of 0.06; fleets of 501-2500 averaged 9.91 with a high of 37.74 and a low of 1.07; fleets of 2501-5000 vehicles averaged 4.34 with a high of 6.40 and a low of 1.36; fleets of 5000 or more vehicles averaged 9.64 with a high of 21.94 and a low of 4.55. Overall, the average accident frequency ratio was 10.03 with a ratio of 7.77 median.

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"Companies that have defensive driving programs most often use pamphlets from the National Safety Council and insurance company newsletters."

Safety Survey Results

(Continued from page 17)

Overall, the most significant changes from the 1980 Safety Survey were the increased percentages of fleets having accident review boards, the organization's ability to obtain total accident costs, and the number of fleets checking employee's driving records before issuing company cars.

"More than half of all fleets in each large fleet category are members of the National Safety Council, while less than half of all fleets in both small fleet categories are members of the NSC."

More than half, 51 percent, of all respondents have accident review boards within the company. In 1980, only 44 percent had review boards. Related to this is an increase in the percentage of fleets able to obtain total accident costs. Eighty-five percent said they could get these figures in 1985 compared to 80 percent in 1980.

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Survey Highlights

- Fifty-four percent of respondents check employees' driving records before issuing company cars.
- Companies with defense driving programs most often use pamphlets from the National Safety Council or insurance company newsletters to promote the programs.
- Almost 60 percent of respondents have implemented company-wide seat belt policies for their drivers.
- Nearly nine out of every ten respondents maintain accident journals or logs of accident reports.

When asked, "Are driving records checked before a company-provided car is assigned to an employee?" 54 percent of respondents answered 'Yes,' an increase of seven percent from 1980. However, less than half of the 1985 respondents, 45 percent, check employee driving records at regular intervals after issuing a company car. This could signal an awareness of safety at the beginning of a driver's career but little reinforcement of that awareness throughout the driver's affiliation with the company.

49% Have Defensive Driving Programs

In 1980, 47 percent of fleets responding had a defensive driving program or accident prevention program. In 1985, 49 percent have these types of programs. Those fleets using driving training rose from 40 percent in 1980 to 41 percent in 1985. Both

"Drivers with repeated accidents are reprimanded in a variety of ways. Most frequently, drivers are made to pay part of the deductible amount of the damage caused to the car."

of these increases show an awareness of the necessity and importance of proper training for roadway dangers but, industry-wide, are still considered low percentages.

Majority Have Accident Journals

An overwhelming majority responded positively to "Do you maintain an Accident Journal or log of vehicle accidents?" This figure remained at 89 percent from 1980 to 1985. Eighty-seven percent record whether the employee or a family member was at fault in an accident and 74 percent report whether the car was being used for business or personal reasons at the time the accident occurred. Seventy percent record the time of day the accident

occurred and 60 percent describe the conditions of the highway. These figures are essential for investigating accidents and developing accident prevention programs.

"The increase in the number of fleets having defensive driving or accident prevention programs shows an awareness of the necessity and importance of proper training for roadway dangers..."

Thirty-two percent of all respondents have safe driving award programs. These include monetary awards, free car options, plaques, certificates, trophies, and dinners.

If your company is looking to expand, upgrade, or start a safety program, 85 percent of survey respondents agreed to share their safety programs with other NAFA members. NAFA is considering asking members of these companies to form a safety-sharing committee. If you feel your company's safety program is well-run, effective, and easily implemented, please contact NAFA.

Response to this year's survey was far below that of 1980. The current survey had only 182 respondents compared to 315 in 1980. The low response can be attributed to the fact that a safety survey had not been done in five years, so interest was generally low. NAFA will correct this problem by issuing an easy-to-answer survey form on an annual basis from now on. This should increase fleet awareness of safety as well as the response rate. ■

Editor's Note: NAFA Headquarters is often asked what safety programs are used by its members. More than 85 percent of survey respondents agreed to share their safety programs with other NAFA Members. NAFA welcomes this information. Send in yours today to: NAFA, 120 Wood Avenue South, Iselin, New Jersey 08830.

Safety Survey Summary of Responses

FLEET SIZE	DEFENSIVE DRIVING/ ACCIDENT PREV PROGRAM		WRITTEN SAFETY POLICY		MANDATORY SEAT BELT REGULATION		DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM		ACCIDENT REVIEW BOARD		ACCIDENT JOURNAL OR LOG		EMPLOYEE OR FAMILY AT FAULT		CONDITION OF HIGHWAY		BUSINESS OR PERSONAL USE		TIME OF DAY ACCIDENT OCCURRED		TOTAL ACCIDENT COST		RECORDS CHECKED BEFORE COMPANY CAR ASSIGNED		RECORDS CHECKED REGULARLY		MEMBER OF NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL		SAFETY COUNCIL'S MATERIAL USED		COUNCIL'S ACCIDENT DEFINITION USED		AWARD PROGRAM	
Yes or No	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Less than 100 (24)	9	15	10	13	10	12	8	15	7	17	16	6	14	6	9	9	12	6	12	8	20	3	11	12	10	9	8	15	11	9	7	9	5	19
100 to 500 (76)	31	45	29	46	34	41	23	52	32	40	67	9	60	7	34	33	42	20	45	23	62	14	39	37	37	38	26	42	35	25	29	28	20	53
501 to 2,500 (64)	38	24	38	20	46	17	29	32	39	22	59	2	53	6	43	17	45	11	45	18	48	16	40	24	24	38	30	27	37	16	34	17	25	36
2,501 to 5,000 (13)	7	5	10	2	8	4	7	4	6	6	10	2	8	2	5	4	8	2	9	1	8	4	4	8	4	7	6	6	7	3	7	3	5	7
5,000 or More (5)	3	2	5	0	4	1	4	1	4	1	4	0	4	0	4	1	3	0	4	0	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	4	0	3	2	1	4
Totals	88	91	92	81	102	75	71	104	88	86	156	19	139	21	95	64	110	39	115	50	141	39	97	83	77	94	73	92	94	53	80	59	56	119